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Strengthening of the United Nations system

Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

Two years ago, at the Millennium Assembly, Member States decided to make the United Nations a more effective instrument for pursuing the priorities adopted in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The need for a strong multilateral institution has never been more acutely felt than it is today, in the era of globalization.

Much has already been achieved. The reforms begun in 1997 were aimed at adapting the internal structures and culture of the United Nations to new expectations and new challenges. Since then, there have been some important achievements -- not least the Millennium Declaration itself, which contains a clear set of priorities, including precise, time-bound development goals. These now serve as a common policy framework for the entire United Nations system.

The United Nations has been in the forefront of the battle to eradicate poverty and fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The implementation of the report of the Panel on United Nations peace operations is improving the Organization's capacity to deploy and manage peacekeeping and peace-building operations, and it has responded well to novel and unexpected challenges in Sierra Leone, Kosovo and Timor-Leste. The United Nations is showing greater coherence, and its disparate elements are working better together. Fruitful partnerships have been built with a wide range of non-State actors. In short, the Organization is evolving with the times. It is more efficient, more open and more creative.

* A/57/150.

** This report was prepared in the context of the Secretary-General's comprehensive review of the work of the Organization, and its submission had to be deferred accordingly.

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But more changes are needed. The present report suggests a number of improvements aimed at ensuring that the Organization devotes its attention to the priorities fixed by the Member States, and that the Secretariat gives better service. However, the intergovernmental organs must also change. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council both need to adapt in order to realize their potential, while the stalled process of Security Council reform needs new impetus. The work programme of the Organization as a whole should be better focused, with fewer but more productive meetings and fewer but more useful documents.

Section II, Doing what matters. The United Nations must align its activities with the priorities defined by the Millennium Declaration and by the global conferences of the past decade. Activities which are no longer relevant must be dropped, while on new issues, or ones that have acquired new urgency — such as globalization and its impact on development, the pursuit of the millennium development goals, conflict prevention and the combat against terrorism — the United Nations must deepen its knowledge, sharpen its focus and act more effectively. Many other areas also deserve greater attention. **The Secretary-General will submit a thoroughly revised programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 to reflect the Organization's new priorities**.

In response to specific requests from the General Assembly, section II also reviews two areas in greater detail:

The promotion and protection of human rights is a bedrock requirement for the realization of the Charter's vision of a just and peaceful world. Good progress has been achieved in integrating human rights throughout the United Nations system. However, further measures are needed to improve the Organization's work in this area: **the capacity of the United Nations to help individual countries to build strong human rights institutions will be strengthened; the procedures of the treaty bodies will be reviewed in order to simplify reporting obligations; the system of special procedures** (rapporteurs, working groups etc.) **will be reviewed, with a view to making it more effective** by ensuring greater consistency, **and will be given better support; and the management of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will be strengthened.** The report also stresses the importance of the Commission on Human Rights, and the need for the Commission to stick firmly to its task of promoting better standards of human rights throughout the world.

The Department of Public Information has suffered from a fragmentation of its efforts as a result of too many mandates and missions. It **will be restructured** so as to be better able to develop coherent communications strategies and take advantage of new media and communication technologies. **A comprehensive evaluation of the impact and cost-effectiveness of all of the Department's activities will be carried out over the next three years. The existing network of United Nations information centres will be rationalized around regional hubs, starting with Western Europe. The Secretary-General will also introduce improvements in the management of United Nations libraries and the Secretariat's publications programme.**

Section III, Serving Member States better. The daily business of the Organization requires support in the form of background material and documents, facilities and interpretation services for meetings, and reports and records of

discussion. Section III outlines measures to **reduce the number of reports submitted each year and to facilitate a more focused and comprehensive approach** to the issues discussed. **It also identifies major improvements to the planning and servicing of meetings,** including the greater use of information technology.

Section IV, Working better together. This section explores ways to improve coordination, both among the component parts of the Organization and between them and civil society.

Important steps have been taken since 1997 to ensure effective coordination among the various United Nations entities working in a given country. Now, **under an implementation plan to be completed by 2003, the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes working in each country will be able to pool their resources and undertake joint programming; common databases and knowledge networks will be established; the resident coordinators in larger and medium-sized countries will be given their own staff; and in countries emerging from conflict, the planning, budgeting and mobilization of resources for all United Nations operational activities will be integrated.**

If they are to be better coordinated and made more effective, the specific roles and responsibilities of the various United Nations entities must first be clearly defined. **A document spelling out who does what in the area of technical cooperation will be completed by September 2003. The management and strategic planning capacity of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs will be strengthened, and the Secretariat's support for the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in their consideration of Africa-related issues will be better coordinated**.

Interaction between the United Nations and *civil society* has grown significantly in the past decade. Thousands of non-governmental organizations now have formal consultative status. Their contribution has enriched the debates and influenced the outcome of many intergovernmental deliberations. However, there have been problems along the way. The time has come to take stock and find better ways of organizing the relationship. **The Secretary-General will establish a high-level panel to make recommendations in this regard.**

The relationship of the United Nations with the *private sector* has also evolved significantly in recent years, with the Global Compact initiative and the establishment of many collaborative partnerships with companies and foundations, in particular the United Nations Foundation. **A Partnerships Office will be created to group these activities under a common umbrella.**

Section V, Allocating resources to priorities. The present United Nations planning and budgeting system is complex and labour-intensive. It involves three separate committees, voluminous documentation and hundreds of meetings. Changes proposed in section V include **a medium-term plan covering only two years (rather than the four as at present), which would be combined with the budget outline** submitted one year before the actual budget is tabled. **The budget document itself would be less detailed and more strategic, and would give the Secretary-General some flexibility to move resources according to needs.** The report also recommends that **intergovernmental review of plans and budgets should henceforth be conducted exclusively in the Fifth Committee of the General**

Assembly, rather than being shared as at present between that body and the Committee for Programme and Coordination (which results in a great deal of unnecessary duplication). **Measures will be taken to streamline peacekeeping budgets, and to improve the management of** the large number of **trust funds** through which Member States provide voluntary contributions to supplement the regular budget.

Section VI, The Organization and its people: investing in excellence. Finally, the report puts forward proposals designed to ensure that the United Nations can count on an able, versatile and well-managed workforce. These new initiatives are intended to: **encourage and reward staff mobility between different locations, functions and even organizations; expand the opportunities open to General Service staff (who will henceforth be officially known, like their professional colleagues, as international civil servants); help staff to balance their professional and private lives; rejuvenate the Organization; further empower managers; strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to deal with HIV/AIDS in the workplace; better resolve internal disputes between management and staff; and enable the United Nations to offer more competitive rates of pay and benefits.**

* * *

The measures described in the present report add up to a very different way of doing business. They cannot be implemented automatically or overnight. Specific units and individuals must be tasked with managing the change, in particular in the Departments that will change most. Resources must be earmarked for retraining staff whose jobs will be affected, and for investment in information technology, which is central to the achievement of many of the measures proposed. The Secretary-General is seeking a strong endorsement from Member States for the entire package.

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I. Strengthening of the United Nations

1. Two years ago, heads of State and Government, meeting as the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations, reaffirmed their faith in the Organization and its Charter as indispensable foundations of a more peaceful, prosperous, and just world. They defined their priorities for the new century: "the fight for development for all the peoples of the world; the fight against poverty, ignorance and disease; the fight against injustice; the fight against violence, terror and crime; and the fight against the degradation of our common home". They resolved "to make the United Nations a more effective instrument for pursuing all of these priorities".

2. Indeed, the need for an effective multilateral institution — one dedicated to the service of humanity as a whole — has never been more acutely felt than in the current era of globalization. This new age of interdependence and integration offers many opportunities to all peoples of the world, but it also poses many dangers. The challenge ahead is to strengthen our capability for collective action and thus forge a common destiny in a time of accelerating global change.

A. What we have achieved

3. Fortunately, an institution to serve the peoples of the world does not have to be built from the ground up. The United Nations exists, not as a static memorial to the aspirations of an earlier age, but as a work in progress — imperfect, as all human endeavours must be, but capable of adaptation and improvement.

4. The United Nations can change, and it has changed — notably since the end of the cold war, which removed the deepest and most intractable source of mistrust among its Members, thus opening up new fields of creative action and cooperation. When I took office as Secretary-General in 1997, the Organization was in flux. One of my first priorities — and the object of one of my early reports to the General Assembly — was to adapt the structures — and also the culture — of the Secretariat to the new expectations and challenges that it faced.

5. Insofar as it depended on me, the changes I suggested then have been implemented, and by and large I believe that they have borne fruit. Perhaps more important, however, has been action taken by Member States. Increasingly over the past five years, they have turned to the United Nations to tackle the new challenges of globalization, and I have been encouraged by the display of imagination and creativity in exploring and developing the Organization's potential. Together, we have brought about some important changes, and we can claim some important achievements.

Defining new development goals

6. First and foremost is the adoption by world leaders of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, through which Member States have provided the world with a common vision for the new century. In the economic and social sphere, especially, this vision is linked to specific, measurable targets for the first 15 years of the century — the millennium development goals. The precise definition of these goals is now clearly agreed to and understood by the various international agencies concerned. Our efforts to foster closer cooperation and greater coherence throughout the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, were thus rewarded. To give impetus to this programme of action, in 2001 I published a road map of the steps needed to reach the millennium development goals (A/56/326), and I have recently delivered the first of what will be annual reports providing an overview of the progress that we are making — or failing to make.

7. Although these development goals were brought together for the first time in the Millennium Declaration, most of them were the product of a series of major international conferences convened in the previous decade to examine different aspects of development, including the meetings on children, the environment, human rights, population, women and social policy. The value of these conferences in achieving global consensus on norms and targets — and indeed on detailed action plans — is now widely acknowledged, even by some who previously were sceptics or critics. The conferences have helped to ensure that the focus of the United Nations has evolved with the times and responded to new challenges facing the world's peoples. In 2002, the conferences held at Monterrey — on financing for development — and at Johannesburg — on sustainable development — have been able to build upon and extend that legacy.

8. Increasingly, the world looks to the United Nations to address social problems that assume global importance — above all the eradication of extreme poverty — and to help to articulate a global consensus on how to deal with them. The Organization played this role notably in 2001 by raising the profile of HIV/AIDS as a global issue, through the convening of a special session of the General Assembly and the preparatory and follow-up activities associated with it. There is obviously no room for complacency on this issue, and I will continue to make it one of my personal priorities. However, the ability of the United Nations to make a vital contribution in such areas is, I believe, no longer in question.

Reforming peace operations

9. The implementation of many of the proposals in the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305-S/2000/809) is another important achievement. We have made significant improvements in our capacity to deploy and manage complex peacekeeping and peace-building operations. While the full value of these improvements will be realized only over time, recent events did not wait to put us to the test. In the past three or four years, we have faced novel and unexpected challenges in this area — most obviously in Sierra Leone, Kosovo and Timor-Leste — and I would venture to say that we have acquitted ourselves quite well. These and other accomplishments can be attributed not only to the hard work and dedication shown by United Nations officials — both in the field and at Headquarters — but also to the Security Council, which has learned from its difficulties in the past decade how to craft wiser and more effective solutions. While there are still major challenges to which the Council has, for a variety of reasons, been unable to respond adequately, there are many conflicts around the world on which its members now work together harmoniously and with real impact.

Enhancing coherence

10. It is by no means only in peace operations, however, that the United Nations is showing greater coherence. In each developing country where we work there is now a unified country team, often located in a single United Nations House. This team brings together the representatives of the Organization's multiple funds, programmes and specialized agencies and is led by a resident coordinator whose mandate is to ensure that the system as a whole is mobilized to meet the needs of each country. This structure reflects the attempts that I have made to ensure coherence and common purpose at the top, by bringing together each week the heads of all departments, funds and programmes as a senior management group, and by instituting cross-departmental executive committees to oversee the four main areas of policy: peace and security; economic and social affairs; humanitarian affairs; and development.

Building partnerships

11. Finally, I would like to draw attention to our success in developing new methods of action based on cooperative partnerships. The United Nations is, and will remain, an intergovernmental organization in which the decision-making power rests firmly in the hands of Member States. At the same time, however, we live in an international system in which influence is also increasingly wielded by non-State actors, such as civil society organizations, voluntary agencies, interest groups, private companies, philanthropic foundations, universities and think tanks and, of course, creative individuals. To bring about change today it is necessary to mobilize the support, and cultivate the ideas, of a diverse network of non-State actors.

12. The United Nations has been trying to learn this lesson. Our work with non-governmental organizations in combating disease, reducing poverty and relieving suffering after disasters is now so familiar that it hardly attracts comment. The activity of philanthropic foundations — in particular, the United Nations Foundation — in promoting our common objectives is increasingly seen as a valuable adjunct to governmental action. My own Global Compact initiative has engaged hundreds of companies from around the world in the effort to promote corporate citizenship and universal values in respect of human rights, labour rights and the environment. Today, a major United Nations gathering without the involvement of civil society in all its various forms is scarcely imaginable.

13. As the preceding account suggests, this is a different Organization from that of 20 years ago, one that is evolving with the times and functioning with greater efficiency, transparency and creativity.

B. What more should be done

14. In the body of the present report, I shall focus on my own area of responsibility and suggest a number of improvements aimed at ensuring that the Secretariat gives better service to its masters, which are the intergovernmental organs. However, if we want a stronger United Nations, change is a necessity for the intergovernmental organs as well. While many improvements have been made, more are needed, and in the following discussion I venture some suggestions.

A stronger General Assembly

15. The General Assembly is the only universal forum in which all States have an equal voice. Through its power to consider and approve the budget, the Assembly has a great deal of authority for the effective functioning of the United Nations. Yet, many Member States consider that the Assembly's contribution to the Organization's work is diminishing, and I share their concern.

16. It is crucially important that the Assembly continue its own reform efforts to further rationalize its agenda. At present, it considers far too many overlapping items, and with a frequency that is often not merited. As a result, the time and institutional energy urgently needed to advance the policy consensus on current or emerging issues of global importance are wasted on reports and debates that are repetitive and sterile, and on the negotiation of resolutions of limited scope and policy impact. Great improvements are possible, however, if duplicative items can be combined, and closely related issues clustered into a single discussion, leading to outcomes of greater policy relevance and impact. The pattern of recurring agenda items should also be rigorously reviewed, with many issues addressed biennially, or at even longer intervals.

17. An additional requirement is for the Assembly to clarify its responsibilities vis-à-vis those of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions, in particular in relation to the follow-up to conferences, in ways that will enable the Assembly to build on and add value to the work of these bodies.

18. I welcome the decision to elect the President of the Assembly and chairs of the various committees three months in advance, rather than on the first day of the session. This should make possible much better planning of the Assembly's timetable, and thereby facilitate other badly needed reforms.

Enhancing the Economic and Social Council

19. The growing role of the United Nations in forging consensus on globally important social and economic issues calls for a corresponding strengthening of the role played by the principal organ concerned with those issues, namely, the Economic and Social Council. The Council has made significant progress in organizing its work into clearly delineated segments, each with a defined thematic focus. This has enabled it to give better guidance to the system as a whole on issues within its sphere of responsibility. One of the most promising innovations has been its annual dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, which, over time, may help to make the Council a privileged global forum for shaping development policies and strategies. However, if this and other meetings of the Council are to continue attracting high-level participants, their agenda and format need to be more focused, and the sessions better prepared.

Stalled process of Security Council reform

20. The Open-ended Working Group established by the General Assembly to examine the reform of the Security Council has been at work for nearly a decade. Yet it seems that agreement on a formula that would allow an increase in Council membership is still eluding Member States. In the eyes of much of the world, the size and composition of the Security Council appear insufficiently representative. The perceived shortcomings in the Council's credibility contribute to a slow but steady erosion of its authority, which in turn has grave implications for international peace and security. Thus, no reform of the United Nations would be complete without reform of the Security Council. At the same time, it is important to remember that authority derives also from the capacity to take prompt and realistic decisions, and from the will to act on them. A reform process that consisted only of an increase in membership would be unlikely to strengthen the Council in this vital respect.

21. The Security Council has significantly improved its working methods over the past few years — stimulated, in part, by the thoughtful deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group. The Council has become more transparent, offering greater

opportunities for the wider membership of the United Nations to participate in its work. There has been an increased number of open meetings with participation by non-members of the Security Council, briefings for the wider membership of the Organization, and improved arrangements for consultations with troop-contributing countries. In the light of these encouraging developments, the Security Council might consider codifying the recent changes in its own practice.

22. Comprehensive approaches to conflict prevention and resolution, and to building sustainable peace, require the involvement and support of the other organs of the United Nations. The Security Council must turn to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council when required and these bodies, in turn, may have to adapt their own procedures and institutional practices in order to be able to discharge their responsibilities.

Too many meetings

23. The number of meetings held under the auspices of the various intergovernmental organs has increased dramatically over the years, as has the number of reports and other documents that they require of the Secretariat. Over the biennium 2000-2001, a staggering 15,484 meetings were held and 5,879 reports were issued. While this trend is in part an inevitable result of an increasingly complex global agenda, it can and should be reversed. The proliferation of meetings and official documents places excessive demands on both the Secretariat and Member States. Many smaller Member States now find it practically impossible to play a meaningful role in even the most crucial activities of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Even larger countries find it increasingly difficult to keep track of — let alone actively participate in — the full range of annual meetings. As a result of these pressures, there is now a palpable need to curtail the volume of official meetings and documents.

24. The same problem applies to major conferences held under the aegis of the United Nations. As noted previously, many of the conferences convened in recent years have made a constructive contribution to international cooperation on issues of global importance. It must now, however, be clear to everyone that the international agenda has become overloaded with such meetings. Summit fatigue has set in, both among the general public and in many Governments. I hope that in the future Member States will exercise self-restraint, and call for additional conferences only when high-level and comprehensive direction is needed on new issues of global policy.

A programme of action

25. Attempts are made below to define more specifically a number of areas in which the Organization may be strengthened, and the corresponding steps that should be taken to make the United Nations a more effective, cohesive and dynamic institution.

26. In section II of the report, "Doing what matters", I discuss the continuing need to align the activities of the Organization with its priorities. In response to the request of the General Assembly, I also outline measures to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations in the areas of human rights and public information.

27. In section III, "Serving Member States better", I offer recommendations on how the Secretariat may better serve Member States through fewer reports that are richer in content and shorter in length, and by improving the management of United Nations conferences and meetings.

28. Section IV, "Working better together", explores ways for institutional actors within and beyond the Organization to strengthen coordination, clarify roles and responsibilities and promote partnerships.

29. Section V, "Allocating resources to priorities", argues that the Organization must allocate its resources more efficiently through fundamental reforms of the planning and budget process.

30. Finally, section VI, "The Organization and its people: investing in excellence", defines ways to foster excellence in our work force, so that the staff may do their best for the Organization and the United Nations, in turn, may offer its people careers that are enriching and rewarding.

II. Doing what matters

31. Our efforts to make the United Nations stronger must start with a good, honest look at what the Organization does — at the multitude of activities, reports and meetings that absorbs the energies of

delegates and the Secretariat alike. The remainder — the structures, procedures, personnel and systems — is intended to ensure that whatever we do, we do well. Unless we make sure that the Organization is focusing on the issues that matter most today, as well as the issues that will matter most tomorrow, our goal of strengthening the Organization will elude us.

32. In the present section, I first examine our programme of work as a whole. I then examine in greater detail two particular areas, human rights and public information, in response to requests from the General Assembly in 2001.

A. Aligning activities with priorities

33. The programme of work of the Organization, is both complex and comprehensive, as is to be expected of an Organization asked to deal with almost every aspect of international cooperation. The programme responds to the many mandates accumulated over the years.

34. The Millennium Declaration, along with the International Conference on Financing for Development, the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the outcomes of other international conferences, outlined a comprehensive vision of what Member States seek to accomplish. We must now ensure that our programme of work is adjusted to support these goals and priorities.

35. We must take a critical look at all our activities, and ask ourselves whether they are relevant to the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and other conference outcomes and whether they have the desired impact. If the answer is no, we must be willing to let them go.

36. On the other hand, there is no shortage of issues on which the United Nations must deepen its knowledge, sharpen its focus and act upon more effectively.

37. Globalization and its impact on development will be a central issue in the years to come. The United Nations must have a greater capacity to help developing countries to take advantage of the opportunities that globalization offers, especially in trade and investment, while minimizing the risks. There is much to be done to ensure that the proper framework of rules, norms and standards are in place to help the international community respond to effectively to the new challenges posed by globalization. The institutions of global governance must also evolve to permit the greater involvement of developing countries in decision-making.

38. The millennium development goals and the commitments agreed upon through the global conferences define critical objectives for the international community. The Organization must enhance its capacity to provide global direction with respect to these objectives, mobilize political will and resources, and assist countries in their effort to develop appropriate national strategies. It must also ensure that there is comprehensive follow-up to the global conferences, including the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The role that science and technology can play in achieving the millennium development goals deserves more attention than it has received to date. We also need greater coherence in United Nations action in support of Africa's development. Without such determined action, we will fail to reduce the unacceptable levels of poverty that affect billions of human beings.

39. I also believe that it is time to take a more comprehensive look at the various dimensions of the migration issue, which now involves hundreds of millions of people and affects countries of origin, transit and destination. We need to understand better the causes of international flows of people and their complex interrelationship with development. We must also prepare for the shift that has already started in the relative proportions of young people and the aged in most parts of the world and its implications for the labour force, social services and political processes.

40. Issues of water scarcity, water pollution, and water-borne diseases — which figured so prominently in Johannesburg at the World Summit on Sustainable Development — are of momentous consequence. These issues engage a great variety of stakeholders, including private sector and civil society actors. We must marshal the energies of the various stakeholders in order to ensure coordinated, effective and timely international action. Energy is another issue that merits greater and more coordinated attention. We must explore its many dimensions, including energy security, rural electrification, renewable sources of energy and energy efficiency. I also believe that we need to be better prepared for natural disasters and incorporate disaster

risk management into our poverty reduction, development and environmental strategies.

41. Central to the mission of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security is its capacity to prevent conflict and consolidate peace after conflicts. We must deepen our understanding of the economic and social causes of violent conflict, strengthen our capacity to help countries to cope with the challenges of promoting unity amid pluralism and diversity, reduce inequality and embed good governance in their public institutions. Indeed, good governance at the local, national and international levels is perhaps the single most important factor in promoting development and advancing the cause of peace. However, much of the good work in conflict prevention will be undone if the Organization does not also further develop its capacity to mitigate global threats, of the use of weapons, especially those involving weapons of mass destruction and the threat of large-scale civilian deaths from the use of conventional arms.

42. The Organization must also strengthen its capacity to play its role in the fight against terrorism, which has been a subject of constant preoccupation since the attacks of 11 September 2001. It must in particular be able to provide advice and assistance to its Member States in their efforts to reinforce their legislative and administrative frameworks. International efforts to combat terrorism, drug trafficking and international crime must expand as part of an integrated strategy to overcome the forces of "uncivil society".

43. There are certainly many other issues that deserve increased attention. We should take advantage of the fact that, in 2003, we will adopt the budget for the biennium 2004-2005. This gives us an opportunity to review and update the programme of work thoroughly, and to adopt a programme budget that is aligned with our agreed priorities.

> ***Action 1.*** **I will submit to the General Assembly in 2003 a thoroughly revised programme budget that better reflects the priorities agreed to at the Millennium Assembly.**

44. The need to update the programme of work, and to identify and dispense with mandates and activities that are no longer relevant, will be a constantly recurring requirement. We need a mechanism to help us do this systematically. I would like to reiterate the proposal for sunset provisions, contained in my 1997 report on reform (A/51/950 and Add.1-6). Each initiative that involves major commitments of funds should be subject to specific time limits, by which time it would be reviewed and renewed only by explicit action of the General Assembly.

B. Strengthening of human rights

45. The promotion and protection of human rights is a bedrock requirement for the realization of the Charter's vision of a just and peaceful world. The rise and diffusion of human rights norms and conventions was one of the truly great achievements of the last century, and the United Nations was at the centre of that effort. Its importance and relevance for the Organization's programme of work has grown over the past decade. The Millennium Declaration affirmed the continuing centrality of that mission: "We will spare no effort to promote ... respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms".

46. The Commission on Human Rights is a vital part of the Organization, with a glorious history, which includes the drafting of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. People all over the world look to it for protection of their rights and for help to win for themselves the better standards of life in larger freedom referred to in the Preamble to the Charter. I strongly urge Member States to keep in mind the true purpose of the Commission, and to seek ways of making it more effective. They must realize that, if they allow elections and debates to be dictated by political considerations, or by block positions, rather than by genuine efforts to strengthen human rights throughout the world, the credibility and usefulness of the Commission will inevitably be eroded.

47. As a worldwide organization, the United Nations provides a unique institutional framework to develop and promote human rights norms and practices, and to advance legal, monitoring and operational instruments to uphold the universality of human rights while respecting national and cultural diversity. The human rights machinery in the United Nations system works in three areas: information, analysis and policy development; provision of support to human rights bodies and organs; and promotion and protection of human rights. These activities are intended as complementary parts of a single strategy to support the

implementation of human rights norms by Member States.

48. Good progress has been achieved to date in integrating human rights throughout the United Nations system. For example, human rights specialists are deployed as part of peacekeeping missions. In most humanitarian operations, the protection of refugees or internally displaced persons is a crucial aspect of the response to emergency situations. Development programmes supported by the United Nations promote human rights through information dissemination and education, as well as through support for human rights institutions, such as national human rights commissions.

49. Our challenge is to build on this progress, especially by helping countries to advance the protection of human rights at home. We also need to continue our efforts to modernize the human rights treaty system, enhance the role of the special procedures for fact-finding, and strengthen the management capacity of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to support these efforts.

Supporting human rights at the country level

50. In paragraphs 25 and 26 of the Millennium Declaration, Member States resolved to strengthen their capacity at the country level to implement the principles and practices of human rights, including minority rights, the rights of women, the rights of children and the rights of migrants. Building strong human rights institutions at the country level is what in the long run will ensure that human rights are protected and advanced in a sustained manner. The emplacement or enhancement of a national protection system in each country, reflecting international human rights norms, should therefore be a principal objective of the Organization. These activities are especially important in countries emerging from conflict.

51. In order to achieve these goals, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has begun to work through the resident coordinator system to ensure that human rights are incorporated into country level analysis, planning and programme implementation. United Nations country teams — including United Nations funds and programmes, the specialized agencies and the World Bank — need access to information, analysis and examples of how to include human rights in country programmes. The Office of the High Commissioner must have the capacity to train country teams, assess and disseminate best practice, and develop monitoring mechanisms for measuring the impact of its human rights programming. To avoid duplication and ensure the best use of resources, the High Commissioner will need to draw upon the support of partner institutions to the maximum extent possible while maintaining a capacity to deploy the Office's own staff when necessary.

> ***Action 2.*** **The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will develop and implement a plan, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Group and the Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs, to strengthen human rights-related United Nations actions at the country level.**

Human rights treaty bodies

52. The existing treaty bodies and human rights mechanisms and procedures constitute a large and intricate network. The growing complexity of the human rights machinery and the corresponding burden of reporting obligations strain the resources of Member States and the Secretariat. As a result, the benefits of the current system are not always clear.

53. At present, there are six committees that correspond to each of the major human rights treaties and conventions. The number of committees will soon increase by one, with the ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. The respective Committees are composed of independent experts who serve under the authority of the treaty bodies — composed of the States that have ratified a given treaty or acceded to a given convention. The current structure of disparate human rights committees — each focusing on important but discrete issues — imposes difficult reporting demands on treaty signatories. As concluded by an independent expert in 1997: "Non-reporting has reached chronic proportions ... States ... either do not report at all, or report long after the due date" (E/CN.4/1997/74, paras. 112-113).

54. Two measures may help to alleviate the shortcomings of the current system. First, the committees should craft a more coordinated approach to their activities and standardize their varied reporting

requirements. Second, each State should be allowed to produce a single report summarizing its adherence to the full range of international human rights treaties to which it is a party.

Action 3. **The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will consult with treaty bodies on new streamlined reporting procedures and submit his recommendations to me by September 2003.**

Improving special procedures

55. To investigate specific country situations and review new and critical issues, the Organization relies upon a range of rapporteurs, high-level representatives and working groups that are collectively known as the human rights special procedures. These procedures are vital instruments and, over the years, have helped to advance the cause of human rights. However, there are now a large number of special procedures — more than 40 are currently active — and they have grown in an ad hoc fashion and without clear ground rules for their operation.

56. Two related sets of measures are required. First, we need to improve the quality of the reports and analyses produced by the special procedures. This can be achieved by setting clear criteria for the use of special procedures and the selection of appointees, and by establishing better guidelines for their operations and reporting functions.

57. Second, the Organization must strengthen its capacity to support the special procedures. The inconsistency in standards surrounding the special procedures may reflect the inadequacy of the resources necessary to carry out the tasks that have been mandated to them. Measures to address this problem could include the appointment of more senior professionals, as well as better administrative support.

Action 4. **The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will undertake a review of the special procedures and report back to me by September 2003 with recommendations on how to enhance their effectiveness and improve the support provided.**

Streamlining management

58. The demands on the Office of the High Commissioner have increased in recent years. The Office receives a limited proportion of its resources from the regular budget and lacks predictable funding. In addition, a variety of funding sources has led to a fragmentation of programme activities. The credibility and effectiveness of the Office will be determined by the availability and predictability of appropriate resources and the capacity of its management to utilize them. The management review requested by the General Assembly and currently being undertaken by the Office of Internal Oversight Services should be a significant source of advice and insight.

Action 5: **The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will develop a plan to strengthen management, taking into account the recommendations emerging from the management review conducted by the Office of Internal Oversight Services. I expect the report to be submitted to me by March 2003.**

C. Enhancing public information

59. The United Nations has a compelling story to tell. That story must be told well, because public support is essential for strengthening the Organization. The United Nations must be able to translate the many resolutions, decisions, declarations and debates into meaningful messages that bring to the fore its central role in working for a better world for all.

60. The Department of Public Information has suffered from a fragmentation of its efforts as a result of too many mandates and missions. A vast amount of information material has been produced, and numerous activities have been organized, but these products must not be seen as ends in themselves. The United Nations must ensure that its information materials and related activities have the desired impact and constitute an effective means to project the Organization's own distinctive voice to the world at large. Therefore, evaluation and monitoring are of key importance.

61. My earlier report (A/AC.198/2002/2), sent to the Committee on Information in March 2002, was a first step in the comprehensive review of the Department requested by the General Assembly. What I am proposing here is a new operating model for the

Department in New York, a new operating concept for the United Nations information centres in the field, and a thorough impact assessment for each of the Department's major product and service lines. I also propose a number of changes to the Secretariat's publications programme and its delivery of library services.

Repositioning the Department of Public Information

62. The Department's activities are manifold: news coverage of United Nations events on radio, video and the Internet; production of information materials to promote particular United Nations issues or conferences; special events and exhibits; guided tours; library services; and relations with media and other groups outside the United Nations. Some of its efforts seek to inform and influence intermediaries, notably the mass media, non-governmental organizations and educational institutions. Others, such as exhibitions and special events at United Nations Headquarters, have more limited audiences.

63. The comprehensive review of the Department has established the need for a clearer conception of its role and a more coherent elaboration of its functions. The Department must concentrate its efforts on key messages that will be part of a coordinated communications strategy with specific goals. We are also planning to strengthen and centralize our web-based communications, as the Internet will be an increasingly important vehicle through which the United Nations message is transmitted in the years to come.

64. The new structure outlined below aims to improve the Department's ability to deliver effective and targeted information programmes:

Action 6. **The Department of Public Information will be restructured as follows:**

(a) A Division of Strategic Communications which will devise and disseminate and evaluate United Nations messages around priority themes;

(b) An Outreach Division in which services to delegations, liaison with civil society and activities for the general public will be grouped together;

(c) A strengthened News and Media Division which will incorporate the Department's web-site operation;

(d) Transfer of the Cartographic Section to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

65. Evaluation will be given considerably greater emphasis in the Department so that programmes are better matched with the needs of target audiences. A comprehensive evaluation of the impact of the Department's activities has never been conducted. A thorough review will take place within the next two to three years, and further decisions on departmental restructuring and resource redeployment may be required afterwards.

Action 7. **The Department of Public Information, with assistance from the Office of Internal Oversight Services, will, over a three-year period, conduct a systematic evaluation of the impact and cost-effectiveness of all of its activities.**

Restructuring United Nations information centres

66. The United Nations is a global organization, dedicated to serving the people of the world. It must do a much better job of strengthening its communications beyond Headquarters. To do this, we must make the network of United Nations information centres more effective for the United Nations system.

67. The United Nations information centres have a vital role to play in communicating the United Nations message around the world, countering misperceptions, and functioning as points of access to United Nations material and data. Often, United Nations information centres are also the eyes and ears of the Organization, reporting back on news about, and sentiments towards, the Organization.

68. A vastly altered world media landscape, changes in the information culture and revolutionary advances in information and communications technology compel the Organization to find different solutions to those that worked well 20 years ago.

69. While the United Nations information centres account for 35 per cent of the Department's overall budget, there are currently so many of them — 71 — that most are thinly staffed and poorly resourced. With

successive zero-growth budgets and targeted cuts occurring at the same time as a significant expansion in the breadth and scope of the Organization's activities, the United Nations information centres are struggling to make a significant contribution and impact.

70. United Nations information centres located in high-cost developed countries — Australia, Japan, the United States of America and most countries in the European Union — currently account for 40 per cent of all expenditures for the centres. While it is important to generate a positive understanding of the United Nations among the media and public of the developed countries, it is a matter of concern that these centres are absorbing such a large portion of available senior staff and funding resources.

71. Resources should be redirected to strengthen United Nations information centres in a smaller number of strategic locations. In most cases, the best option would be to create a United Nations regional information hub with the resources and capacity to inform the public in various regions about United Nations activity in a more focused, professional way. The hubs can adapt information materials to suit the needs of the geographical area that they serve; maintain a central depository of reports, publications and data; and proactively engage with the media and the public at large. In developing countries, they would work in close cooperation with the resident coordinator system.

72. As a first step, I intend to rationalize and consolidate the 13 information centres located in Western Europe into a regional hub. This will free up resources for a strong, efficient information hub and for redeployment to activities of higher priority. I believe we should move forward with a similar approach for other regions over the next three years.

Action 8. **I propose to rationalize the network of United Nations information centres around regional hubs, starting with the creation of a Western European hub.**

Integrating United Nations libraries

73. The United Nations library services are spread too thinly. There are large collections in each of the Headquarters offices, as well as at the regional commissions, the individual libraries at many of the United Nations information centres and the depositories in 246 separate locations around the world. The General Assembly requested an in-depth review of all United Nations library activities. The review has highlighted two major areas in need of attention: lack of integrated management and a need for modernization.

74. The United Nations libraries have been operating independently with very little centralized oversight and direction. Certain libraries have developed specialized capabilities that are currently underutilized. The United Nations library at Geneva, for example, is well positioned to develop a single paper-based collection and centralize efforts to digitize and disseminate materials online to other locations. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library, located at United Nations Headquarters, is in a better position to develop basic library policy for all locations and to take the lead in coordinating and managing web content for the entire Organization.

75. Opportunities exist for modernizing our libraries through the use of technology. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library, in particular, is moving in the direction of a virtual library, not only in the way that it provides its traditional service to missions and staff, but also in its outreach to civil society through web sites and in its services to depository libraries throughout the world. A long-term aim would be the creation of a single, multilingual electronic gateway for accessing collections, documents and information. Realizing this vision would result in a significant reduction in the quantities of paper documents required for distribution. We will ensure, however, that as we attempt to modernize the United Nations library system, the permanent missions of Member States will continue to have access to hard-copy versions of United Nations collections and documents. This basic concept of online access — with hard-copy back-up, where needed — will be further developed in an action plan.

Action 9. **The management of United Nations libraries will be improved as follows:**

(a) The Dag Hammarskjöld Library in New York assumes responsibility for setting policy and coordinating the work of all United Nations libraries;

(b) The Department of Public Information, in conjunction with the Department of Management, will prepare a comprehensive plan for the integration of the United Nations library services at various

locations, through the use of information and communications technologies;

(c) The Department of Public Information will formulate and implement a plan to improve electronic access to United Nations collections, facilitate the transfer of paper collections to electronic files and provide training to depository librarians.

Improving oversight of publications

76. In 2001, the General Assembly requested a comprehensive review of the Secretariat's publications programme. More than 1,200 new or revised titles are being published every year. There is great variation in length (from 4 to 2,000 pages), format, target audience and print runs (from 100 to 15,000 copies).

77. The United Nations flagship publications provide essential, widely used information in key subject areas. In some cases, these publications serve as a leading reference source for researchers and policy experts around the world. They are also a significant and effective element of the advocacy activities of the United Nations. Our key challenge, however, is getting the right publication to the right reader at the right time.

78. A review of all the other published materials — ranging from major reference works to periodicals and bulletins — suggests considerable fragmentation and duplication.

79. There is a need to improve the level of scrutiny and oversight of publications. Decisions to publish are not based on a rigorous analysis of the document's added value, intended audience or cost. The high-level Publications Board has not proved to be an effective instrument for ensuring quality and process control.

80. I believe that substantive departments within a given area must work with one another to plan and coordinate their publications so as to minimize fragmentation and duplication. Potential costs and benefits of each publishing decision must be carefully assessed. The role of a publications board should be to establish common standards and policies, such as the criteria for determining the size and type of print-run and whether royalty payments should be paid back to the departments from which the publications originate.

81. The economics of providing highly specialized information to small niche audiences has forced commercial publishers in the reference and scholarly arenas to convert an increasing amount of their content to online services. I am convinced that migration to online service and delivery is crucial to the continued relevance of the United Nations as a source of authoritative and timely information. For example, the annualized statistical databases — currently produced in multiple languages but largely out of date by the time of issuance — should be distributed online. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has made significant progress in this regard, not only by placing much of its printed material online but also by establishing an online tracking system and a multilevel subscription plan that charges users for access, depending on their location and ability to pay.

82. I am committed to ensuring that a transformation to a digital information infrastructure will not adversely affect countries in which use of the Internet is limited. Therefore, we must maintain the capacity to provide hard copy documents, where needed, through investment in appropriate printing systems. If done properly, this new approach should ensure more rapid delivery of critical United Nations information to those who need and value it most.

83. One publication that should be eliminated entirely is the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs*, which was first requested by Member States in the 1950s. The *Repertory* is a comprehensive summary of the decisions of the United Nations organs, together with related material, organized by Charter Article, and intended to illuminate questions of application and interpretation of the Charter. Compiling the *Repertory* is an onerous reporting responsibility requiring significant resources. The Secretariat is simply unable to respond with timely updates. Since the primary users of this document are researchers and academics, an academic institution may wish to consider taking over the responsibility for maintaining the *Repertory*.

Action 10. **Improvements to publications will be made as follows:**

(a) The Executive Committees will plan and coordinate all publications within their respective thematic areas in order to reduce the number of and improve the coherence, focus and scheduling among the Organization's many publications. The Department of Public Information will do the same for the titles it publishes;

(b) The Publications Board will be reconstituted as a standard-setting body, with appropriate membership and terms of reference to match that function;

(c) The feasibility and cost of online publications delivery, supplemented by a print-on-demand capability will be reviewed;

(d) The *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs* should no longer be produced by the United Nations.

III. Serving Member States better

84. In order for the United Nations to address any substantive matter, Member States depend on an infrastructure of support and activity that is critically important but not widely appreciated. Member States require background materials and documents, facilities and interpretation services for their meetings, and reports and records of their deliberations and decisions. How the United Nations performs in this respect is essential to the effectiveness of the entire Organization.

85. In the present section, I discuss measures to improve the coherence and impact of United Nations reports and to reduce their number. I also propose measures to help to create a more integrated approach to planning and managing meetings.

A. Streamlining reports

86. The impact and relevance of what the United Nations does is critically reliant on the quality of its reports. They provide the necessary data and analysis that the major United Nations organs require to make informed choices on substantive questions of policy and the allocation of resources throughout the Organization. United Nations reports also provide a documentary record of its debates and the decisions it takes on a staggering range of issues.

87. The value of the reports is dependent on the depth of research that underpins them, the clarity with which their content is communicated, and the timeliness of their production and delivery schedules. At present, the reports are overwhelming in number, tend towards duplication and are fragmented in their impact. More than 500 reports were submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, with another 100 submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its concurrent session. In addition, reporting requests from the principal organs of the Organization frequently replicate requests from subsidiary bodies and functional commissions.

88. Member States, especially the small countries, find it difficult to cope with the mountains of paper that need to be absorbed and acted upon. The Secretariat itself is struggling to keep abreast of the growing number of reports requested by the various intergovernmental bodies. The sheer volume of the demands is drowning its ability to provide focused and value-added analysis.

89. The content and timeliness of reports affects the quality of decision-making throughout the system. Fewer, but more timely reports of higher quality will be critical to the task of revitalizing the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Streamlining reporting would help advance policy coherence and ensure an integrated treatment of related policy issues by the intergovernmental bodies.

90. Member States have recognized the need for a new approach. The Economic and Social Council, at its most recent session, called for efforts by its members, its subsidiary bodies and the Secretariat to ensure greater overall coherence among the reports requested and those presented to the Council and to streamline its documentation. It also invited the Secretariat to present consolidated reports on related mandates.

91. The proposals that follow are based on two basic principles: an integrated treatment of interrelated issues and a reduction in quantity, length, and frequency.

92. A preliminary review has revealed that a large number of reports are produced on similar subjects. For example, there are more than 15 reports produced annually on United Nations relations with other organizations, and a similarly large number on individual disaster relief operations, some of them dating back several years. In the future, we will produce a single integrated report for each of these issues. I will also continue to identify other opportunities to consolidate and regroup recurrent reports.

93. The picture is especially complicated in the economic and social areas. Reports are written in a number of departments and offices, based on multiple requests from the Economic and Social Council, the

Second and the Third Committee of the General Assembly and the functional commissions of the Council.

94. A schema for consolidating and rationalizing reports could include the following:

(a) The comprehensive overview of all of the issues facing the United Nations would be provided in the two mandated annual reports — the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, and the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The first of these reports provides a retrospective account of the Organization's work, the second monitors global progress and is more analytical and forward-looking;

(b) There could then be a few cross-cutting reports that would address major global themes, such as globalization and poverty, relevant to both the Second and Third Committees;

(c) Guided by these broader reports, a limited number of thematic reports for each of the Second and Third Committees, covering their recurring agenda items and specific reporting requests that are best addressed as an integral part of those thematic reports.

95. These major reports could also be used as background documents in the subsidiary bodies.

96. In exercising discretion in the way I respond to your future reporting requests, I will be guided by two concerns: enhancing the coherence of the analysis that the Secretariat puts forward for the Assembly's consideration; and assisting the Assembly in addressing related issues in an integrated way, thus helping it to maximize the policy relevance and impact of the results of its deliberations.

97. Not all reports are of equal value or importance, and the production of a document is not necessarily the most efficient means of communication on certain matters. I foresee that:

(a) In cases of requests for factual clarification or periodic update of recurrent activity, an oral report could be given to the relevant committee or body. This would be included in the summary record of the meeting and available for distribution the following day;

(b) Reports with policy content would continue to be submitted as reports of the Secretary-General. Reports providing information of a routine nature, such as information notes and agenda papers, could be submitted as reports of the Secretariat.

98. Our reports could also be improved by:

(a) Strict adherence to page limits. We have already improved observance of the rules;

(b) Use of simple, crisp language;

(c) Greater focus on actions required and recommended;

(d) Encapsulation of the report's essence in a short executive summary.

99. Finally, there are issues to address concerning the frequency of reporting, and the fact that requests for reports to be produced periodically stay on the books long after they have become obsolete. I urge Member States to consider the frequency of the various reporting requirements and the possibility of establishing a systematic review mechanism for determining whether recurring reports are in fact still needed.

Action 11. **Reporting will be improved by:**

(a) Consolidating reports on related subjects;

(b) Writing sharper reports with clearly defined actions;

(c) Observing stipulated page limits.

Action 12. **I encourage the General Assembly to establish a mechanism to review the continuing need and the frequency of recurring reporting requirements.**

B. Managing conferences and meetings

100. The United Nations convenes conferences and meetings, and produces a vast variety of reports and documents, on a daily basis. These are not marginal activities of the Organization, but reflect a central and fundamental aspect of how the world's most inclusive multilateral institution conducts its business.

101. The General Assembly has requested a comprehensive review of the working methods, functions and productivity levels of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, the details of which are contained in a separate report

of the Secretary-General (A/57/289). On the basis of that thorough review, I intend to move forward with a number of fundamental improvements in the way the Department delivers services to Member States.

Integrated approach to planning and managing meetings and documentation

102. The Department should play a more proactive role in enhancing the effectiveness of the total process of intergovernmental activity. This will require an adjustment of its methods to emphasize advance planning, and an integrated approach to managing meetings and documentation; a new organizational structure to increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness; and the strategic utilization of information technology for the production, translation and distribution of documents, as well as the planning and management of meetings. To reflect these and other changes, the Department will now be known as the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. Among the changes that will be implemented are those below.

103. **Advance planning**. The Department will considerably improve its planning for both meetings and documentation, in consultation with the relevant intergovernmental bodies and other Secretariat departments. The Department will develop detailed planning arrangements for both meetings and documentation well in advance of the opening of the General Assembly session and in consultation with the President of the Assembly and the bureaux of the various committees and conferences.

104. **Coordination**. The secretaries of the six main committees of the General Assembly will meet on a regular basis throughout the year to act as a coordinating mechanism to plan and schedule meetings. They will also work closely with the Department to ensure that all necessary documents are prepared in a timely fashion.

105. **Maximizing global presence.** The Department will be directed to use its worldwide pool of personnel and resources to best match the needs and requirements of the Organization on a real-time basis, thus cutting costs. It will also assume responsibility for implementing workload-sharing arrangements and harmonizing all of its relevant policies, processes, and databases.

106. **Meeting management**. The Department will work with the committees of the General Assembly to ensure that meetings have manageable agendas, and that all formal discussions begin and end on time.

107. **Electronic document processing.** In order to manage the flow of documents more efficiently and to make them available on the widest possible basis, the Department will seek to implement a comprehensive system of digital document processing. It will launch a continuously updated web-based Journal, with active hyperlinks to all referenced documents. It will include a database for all meeting activities.

108. **Document management**. A new slotting system will ensure the availability of reports in all required languages well ahead of the date they are scheduled to be considered by the body for which they have been prepared. The eventual introduction of print-on-demand technology will allow the distribution of documents in the format requested by Member States and reduce press-runs, shipping costs and paper consumption.

Action 13. **The Department of General Assembly and Conference Management will implement changes to allow a more integrated approach to planning and managing meetings and documentation.**

IV. Working better together

109. The common public policy challenges posed by the current global era cross both national borders and institutional boundaries. Whether our objective is to reduce extreme poverty or combat HIV/AIDS, or to ensure sustainable development or prevent armed conflict, the strategies we pursue must rely on coordinated action within the Organization and enhanced cooperation with outside partners.

110. In the present section, I will outline steps to improve coordination in the Organization and to clarify further institutional roles and responsibilities. I will also identify structural improvements in the economic and social field and with respect to Africa. The section concludes with a discussion of how the United Nations may engage more effectively with actors from civil society and the private sector.

A. Coordinating for better results

111. The United Nations is a complex institution with a global mandate, an ambitious agenda and complicated machinery for addressing a vast range of often interrelated issues. Improving coordination within the Organization was a major focus of my 1997 reforms. Since then we have made significant progress, and the United Nations today functions in a more cohesive and coherent manner.

112. We have to do better still, however, if the United Nations is to achieve the system-wide coordination demanded by the daunting social, economic and political challenges that it confronts each day. The lives and well-being of large numbers of people depend on our ability to work together more effectively.

Coordination at Headquarters and at the regional level

113. As part of the 1997 reform effort, I established the Senior Management Group, which is composed of the heads of all departments, funds and programmes. In addition, four executive committees were established on peace and security, economic and social affairs, humanitarian affairs, and development. The introduction of these coordinating bodies has improved information-sharing and encouraged closer collaboration.

114. I intend to make greater use of the executive committees to improve strategic planning, promote coherent policy development, and to encourage analysis of the linkages among the political, economic, developmental, humanitarian and security issues confronting the Organization. In particular, I expect the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs to provide strategic direction and ensure complementarity in the work of the various entities involved in the economic and social areas. To this end, the Committee will oversee the formulation of the medium-term plan and the programme budget for the economic and social areas.

115. The regional commissions play a special role in the economic and social area. As outposts of the United Nations in different regions of the world, they perform functions that contribute to the Organization's global work programme. They also articulate the Organization's priorities in their respective regions, and give a regional perspective to global issues. Each of the regional commissions has recently carried out a substantive review of its programme of work. As a result, the commissions have crafted agendas that better reflect the priorities of the various regions. In response to Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46 of 31 July 1998, the regional commissions will work with the specialized agencies, funds, and programmes to strengthen the coherence of United Nations action at the regional level. They will also pursue greater cooperation and coordination with regional organizations outside the United Nations system.

Field coordination

116. For most of the world's citizens, the relevance, capacity and effectiveness of the United Nations are seen through the prism of their experience with United Nations staff and activities in their home country. In every country in which the United Nations operates, its overarching purpose is to serve its people. We can perform this mission effectively only by working together.

117. Coordination mechanisms, such as the United Nations Development Group and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, have helped to enhance the collective impact of the separate operational entities, including the specialized agencies. Agencies, funds and programmes have begun to simplify and harmonize procedures. New planning instruments, such as the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, have helped to shape the analysis of national needs and priorities and translate broad objectives into mission-oriented tasks. These tools have been applied in most developing countries with the collaboration of the host Governments. Another planning instrument, the consolidated appeal process, now includes a common humanitarian action plan to respond collectively to the needs of countries in crisis. Staff selection and training have been geared towards ensuring that the necessary leadership skills and competence to manage operations effectively are present in the United Nations country team. In Sierra Leone and Afghanistan, coordination responsibilities have been given to the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in order to respond more effectively to the political, security, humanitarian and developmental needs of post-conflict countries.

Next steps

118. The resident coordinator system is the lynchpin of field coordination and will be strengthened to provide better support to development and humanitarian programmes. Practical measures, ranging from joint programming to integrated resource mobilization, will be developed to enhance further the effectiveness of the United Nations system and to ensure that its combined resources are put to best use.

119. For example, with joint programming, two or more organizations would support the same national partner, either by a combining of resources into a single project or by different agencies implementing discrete components of the same project. Another measure is the pooling of resources, whereby a designated United Nations agency acts as trustee to receive and hold funds on behalf of the United Nations system for an agreed programme or project. Individual United Nations agencies would access these pooled funds in discharging their programme or project responsibilities. This will require some adjustments to financial regulations, improvements in the use of information technology and a clear system of accountability to donors, including common reporting and joint evaluations. Another area for improvement is the development of common databases and shared knowledge networks that would ensure access by country teams to the knowledge and expertise available in the United Nations system throughout the world. In the medium-sized and larger countries, staff resources dedicated to the resident coordinator will be required. Finally, in countries emerging from conflict, the planning, budgeting and resource mobilization tools will be adapted to ensure greater coherence and coordination among the operational activities of the United Nations.

> ***Action 14.*** **The United Nations Development Group will develop, by September 2003, an implementation plan to strengthen the effectiveness of the Organization's presence in developing countries. This plan will include such features as joint programming, pooling of resources, common databases and knowledge networks, dedicated support for the resident coordinator and integrated planning, budgeting and resource mobilization tools for countries emerging from conflict.**

120. In the longer term, I believe the United Nations should look at alternative models for its country-level activities. While we need to preserve the distinctive contribution of each United Nations agency, we should nonetheless explore different forms of United Nations presence at the national level. For example, in countries in which United Nations financial and human resources are small, agencies, funds and programmes could establish a joint office. In agreement with the host Government, a common programme would be established, for which the United Nations would pool staff in a single office. In the medium-sized and larger countries, agencies, funds and programmes could cluster around thematic issues, with different "host agencies" providing leadership along sectoral lines. The host agency would represent other entities of the system not present in the country. Financial, administrative and programme services could be provided by the host agency on a cost-recovery basis.

121. Tighter coordination among United Nations entities has been a concern not only for the funds and programmes that form part of my Senior Management Group but for the leadership of the whole United Nations system. The executive heads of all agencies, funds and programmes are strongly committed to collaboration in the field as a means of responding more effectively to the needs of Member States and their peoples.

B. Clarifying roles and responsibilities

122. The United Nations encompasses a broad spectrum of issues and operates in many different locations. Each area of activity has multiple actors, and the division of labour among them is not always as clear as it should be. The ambitious, interlinked goals of the Millennium Declaration suggest an even greater demand for the Organization to approach its programme of work in a much more integrated fashion. It is also imperative that both the Member States and the United Nations entities have a clear understanding of who does what.

Technical cooperation

123. One area in which clarification is especially needed is in the delivery of technical cooperation to developing countries. Almost all United Nations entities provide technical cooperation in some form or another. Clarifying who does what in this area is

particularly important, given the increasing resources, capabilities and programme reach of the international financial institutions.

124. In seeking to clarify roles and responsibilities among various United Nations entities, I believe the following principles should apply:

(a) Lead responsibility for a given issue or activity should rest with the entity best equipped substantively to assume it;

(b) Entities in the lead on a given issue or activity should work in close collaboration with the rest of the United Nations rather than attempt to duplicate expertise available elsewhere in the Organization;

(c) More systematic efforts should be made to draw on the vast reservoir of knowledge and expertise that exists outside the United Nations system;

(d) Technical cooperation should be delivered to the maximum extent possible by the entities that have an established field presence and experience. Secretariat entities should provide policy guidance and expertise, as appropriate.

125. I intend to issue within the next 12 months a document identifying roles and responsibilities for technical cooperation in key areas. I would urge donors to then adjust their funding decisions accordingly.

> ***Action 15.*** **A document clarifying roles and responsibilities in the area of technical cooperation will be prepared by September 2003.**

Peace operations

126. To strengthen further the Secretariat's work in international peace and security, there is a need to bring a sharper definition to the existing lead department policy, which sets out the relationship between the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The Department of Political Affairs will increase its focus in the fields of preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and peacemaking. The Department will also intensify its engagement in policy formulation across the full spectrum of the Secretariat's tasks in the domain of international peace and security. It will continue to be the lead department for political and peace-building offices in the field. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations will be the lead department for the planning and management of all peace and security operations in the field, including those in which the majority of personnel are civilians.

127. This arrangement will not prejudice the current formula for financing these operations. It will be implemented in the context of concurrent measures to enhance the overall policy development and coordination role of the Executive Committee for Peace and Security.

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

128. The consolidation of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in 1997 brought together key functions that had previously been dispersed throughout the Secretariat, such as demographic and statistical data production and analysis, economic and social policy analysis, and technical cooperation. The goal of consolidation was to produce a more coherent and substantive response to the needs of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. While this has generally been achieved — especially with regard to the global conferences of the past few years — the sheer number of meetings that the Department services and the reports that it prepares have stretched its ability to respond effectively and efficiently to Members States, and to coordinate its activities more effectively with other parts of the United Nations working in the economic and social field.

129. In addition, the outcomes of the global conferences and the Millennium Declaration require an integrated approach across different sectors to policy planning and advice. There is also a corresponding need to reach out to the rest of the United Nations system and work with numerous other partners in international organizations, civil society and the private sector. In particular, Member States have requested dedicated attention to the follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

130. Because of the great complexity of the Department's work in policy analysis and technical cooperation, the growing demands placed on it for servicing the Economic and Social Council, the functional commissions and global conference follow-up activities, and the many emerging issues falling within the Department's responsibilities on which the Secretariat must deepen its knowledge and sharpen its

focus, there is an urgent need to reinforce the Department's capacity to manage such a breadth of subject areas and responsibilities. In particular, I intend to reinforce the Department's strategic planning capacity by establishing, from within its existing resources, a small policy planning unit. I also believe that we need to strengthen the executive direction capacity in this Department. At present, one of the two existing positions of Assistant Secretary-General in the Department — the Special Adviser for Gender Issues — while administratively attached to the Department, is entrusted with specific, system-wide functions focusing on the advancement of women throughout the Organization. I thus propose the addition of a position of Assistant Secretary-General to assist in the overall management of the Department's work and to support coherent policy development in the Department. Complementing these actions, measures are being taken to strengthen collaboration between the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Department.

Action 16. **I will propose in the next biennium budget the creation of an additional position of Assistant Secretary-General to support policy coherence and management in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.**

Action 17. **A policy planning unit will be established in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.**

Africa

131. The special needs of Africa have been acknowledged in United Nations conferences and in the Millennium Declaration. Africa will remain a cross-cutting priority, and the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies will continue to address political and economic developments in the region. It is essential that international and United Nations support be promoted and monitored to ensure that appropriate attention is focused on Africa. Attention at the global level will complement support at the national and regional levels, at which the technical cooperation and analytical work of the United Nations is undertaken. The panel of eminent personalities which carried out the independent evaluation of the United Nations New Agenda for Development Assistance for Africa has recommended the submission of a single comprehensive report on Africa to the General Assembly, linking the dimensions of peace and security with development. In preparing this and other reports on Africa for the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary organs, it is important to ensure that the contributions from the various parts of the United Nations system and beyond are consolidated and submitted in a coherent manner.

132. The independent evaluation of the New Agenda recommended the implementation of appropriate coordination measures at United Nations Headquarters to support the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in their deliberations on Africa. Pursuant to this recommendation, I have decided to give the Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa the responsibility of coordinating and guiding the preparation of Africa-related reports in the Secretariat and to transfer under his responsibility the resources currently allocated to the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, which is at present located in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Action 18. **The Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa will coordinate and guide the preparation of reports and input for the Africa-related debates of the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies. For this purpose, the resources allocated to the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries will be transferred to his office.**

C. Promoting partnerships

133. International society is becoming more plural and diverse. Actors from civil society and the private sector are increasingly involved in international cooperation at every level, from the local to the global. Their form of involvement ranges from advancing ideas and proposals to concrete activities, such as the delivery of public health services or food aid. Their indispensable contribution is widely recognized. That is why, in the Millennium Declaration, Member States resolved to give greater opportunities to the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society, in general, to contribute to the realization of the Organization's goals and programmes. In the present section I will address the interaction between civil society and the United Nations system, and the particular case of the relationship between the private sector and foundations and the United Nations.

Engaging civil society

134. There has been an exponential growth in the number of civil society actors, and in the volume of transnational networks in which they are embedded. The number of international non-governmental organizations grew forty-fold over the course of the twentieth century, to more than 37,000 in 2000. The expanding worldwide networks of non-governmental organizations embrace virtually every level of organization, from the village community to global summits, and almost every sector of public life, from the provision of microcredit and the delivery of emergency relief supplies, to environmental and human rights activism.

135. The relationship of the United Nations with civil society organizations is as old as the Charter itself. Partnership between the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations in the humanitarian and development areas has been the rule for decades. Indeed, the relationship is so close that, in many cases, non-governmental organizations participate in the planning processes of the United Nations at country level.

136. The extensive interaction of civil society actors with the intergovernmental processes is of more recent vintage. It has really blossomed with the world conferences of the past decade. The formal deliberations and decisions of many such meetings are now often enriched by the debates carried out in non-governmental forums and events held in parallel with the official conferences. Many United Nations treaty bodies now routinely consider alternate reports from non-governmental organizations alongside the official reports from Governments. In some cases, non-governmental organizations have addressed plenary sessions of conferences and participated in formal, round-table discussions with governmental delegates. Many Governments now include civil society representatives in their delegations to international conferences and special sessions, and sometimes also to the General Assembly.

137. The Security Council has also adopted some innovative and creative measures to allow non-governmental voices to be heard by its members. The Arria formula, for example, enables non-governmental organizations to give testimony to Security Council members in relation to specific crises, as well as on such issues as children in armed conflict, outside the official meetings.

138. Today, more than 2,000 non-governmental organizations have formal consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, and about 1,400 with the Department of Public Information. More than 3,500 non-governmental organizations were given formal accreditation to the most recent global conference, the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

139. As a result of this explosive growth in participation, the system that has evolved over several years for facilitating the interaction between the United Nations and civil society actors is showing signs of strain:

(a) The rapid increase in the number of non-governmental organizations has put our facilities and resources under great pressure. It is now physically impossible for the Organization to accommodate all non-governmental organizations requesting participation in United Nations conferences and meetings;

(b) There exists a great variety of accreditation processes. Despite a substantial body of practice, non-governmental organizations wishing to attend and participate in United Nations conferences and meetings often encounter uneven standards and confusing procedures;

(c) Many Member States are wary of the constant pressure to make more room for non-governmental organizations in their deliberations, while non-governmental organizations consider that they are not allowed to participate meaningfully;

(d) There is a great imbalance in the numbers of non-governmental organizations from the industrialized and those from the developing countries, with very few of the latter taking part in United Nations activities;

(e) A number of civil society actors — parliamentarians and private sector groups, to name but two — do not consider themselves to be non-governmental organizations, and the modalities for their participation are not very clear;

(f) The responsibility for engaging with non-governmental organizations is spread across several units in the Secretariat.

140. Some non-governmental organizations have attempted to address the above-mentioned concerns. In

many instances, they have come together to offer collective views on substantive questions of policy. Some have attempted to respond to questions raised about their breadth of representation and accountability, by exploring a system of self-regulation and agreed codes of conduct. Several non-governmental organizations have made efforts to expand their membership so as to incorporate people and groups from developing countries.

141. It is, of course, the prerogative of the Member States to define the terms and conditions governing the accreditation and participation of non-governmental organizations in United Nations conferences and other deliberations. However, all concerned would benefit from engagement with civil society actors based on procedures and policies that reflect greater coherence, consistency and predictability. I believe that it would be useful to take stock of the Organization's experience thus far in interacting with civil society. As a first step, I will assemble a group of eminent persons representing a variety of perspectives and experiences to review past and current practices and recommend improvements for the future in order to make the interaction between civil society and the United Nations more meaningful.

> ***Action 19.*** **I will establish a panel of eminent persons to review the relationship between the United Nations and civil society and offer practical recommendations for improved modalities of interaction.**

Engaging the private sector

142. Relations between the United Nations and the private sector have also grown exponentially over the past five years. This reflects the increasing recognition of the power of the private sector to generate employment, investment and economic growth in a globalized world and the corresponding need for the United Nations to engage the private sector in efforts to achieve sustainable development. It also reflects the growing recognition in the private sector of the importance of international norms and standards for the conduct of business.

143. The engagement of the United Nations with the private sector has been beneficial to the Organization and for the causes that have received generous support. However, these partnerships are not a substitute for what Governments themselves must do.

144. In 1999, I urged international business leaders to work together with labour and civil society groups to make globalization more equitable and sustainable. The Global Compact initiative, launched in July 2000, seeks to advance nine core principles with respect to human rights, labour rights and protection of the environment. It provides a broad framework for engaging the private sector and today involves hundreds of companies, as well as international labour groups and non-governmental organizations, from around the world. It is my hope that, in time, the Global Compact will prove to be an important instrument for instilling civic virtue in the global marketplace.

145. The collaboration of the United Nations with the private sector is not entirely new. The United Nations funds and programmes have had such relations for a very long time, with private sector companies and foundations supporting the Organization with resources, knowledge and other forms of assistance. Acting individually or in partnership with United Nations agencies and civil society organizations, many philanthropic and business leaders are engaged in programmes at the country level to combat HIV/AIDS, provide improved health care to rural communities, protect fragile environments and increase adult literacy, and in other initiatives.

146. More recently, there has been a significant increase in interest from private sector firms and foundations to collaborate with the United Nations on a more global level. Notable are the unprecedented contribution of Ted Turner to the United Nations through the United Nations Foundation, the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in the fight against HIV/AIDS and other diseases, and the contributions of many additional foundations and private sector companies to worldwide causes supported by the United Nations in the social and humanitarian areas. The United Nations Fund for International Partnerships, originally created to collaborate with the United Nations Foundation, has had to extend its services to respond to the queries and information needs of an increasing number of private sector entities eager to work with the United Nations.

147. I believe there is merit in regrouping under one common umbrella the Global Compact Office and the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships. The two units have and will continue to have very different roles, with the Compact providing an

engagement mechanism to promote the nine principles, and the Fund facilitating and mobilizing resources for partnerships. It is important, however, to have a single focal point for the Organization's engagement with the private sector and philanthropic organizations. Funding for posts and activities will continue to come essentially from extrabudgetary resources, and the Global Compact will continue its policy of raising its funding from Member States and foundations, and not from private sector companies.

> ***Action 20.*** **A Partnerships Office will be created to regroup under one common umbrella the Global Compact Office and the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships.**

V. Allocating resources to priorities

148. To ensure that our work reflects the priorities of the Millennium Declaration, we must apply an efficient, flexible system for allocating adequate resources to the Organization's priorities. We need a planning and budgeting process that is responsive to the dynamic environment in which we operate and focuses the attention of both the Secretariat and Member States on results. The existing system fails this test.

149. In the present section, I look at our current process of planning and budgeting and identify several important areas for simplification and improvement. I also examine ways to streamline the budgets for peacekeeping operations and to improve the management of trust funds.

Recent trends

150. It is a fact of life that the United Nations needs resources for implementing the numerous mandates that it receives every year. The Organization relies on Member States to provide adequate resources and to pay their contributions in full and on time. I am pleased to report that the Organization's financial situation has improved somewhat in recent years. The agreement reached in December 2000 on the modification of the assessment scales paved the way for the payment of a significant portion of the arrears due the Organization by the United States of America. These sums were turned over to those nations owed money for their contributions of troops to various peacekeeping missions. Favourable economic conditions also allowed other Member States to catch up on outstanding dues. In 2001, total receipts from all Member States represented the highest level of contributions received in any one year of the Organization's history.

151. Nevertheless, the reality is that in recent years the Organization's regular budget has not kept pace with inflation, while the number of mandated activities has increased significantly. The Organization has been able to continue functioning through careful monitoring of expenditure, productivity improvements and favourable exchange rate movements — but also, regrettably, by serious under-investment in training, information technology and maintenance of facilities. This last point is a source of particular concern; the neglect of the physical infrastructure of the Organization's Headquarters has now reached critical dimensions. It is therefore imperative that we move forward with the proposed capital master plan for the refurbishment of the Secretariat building in New York.

152. I have said many times that the Secretariat has reached the limit of what it can deliver with the existing resources. Whatever savings can be achieved through reforms must be reinvested to strengthen those parts of the Organization that have been weakened in recent times. This reform must not become a pretext for another round of budget cuts. Indeed, I believe that the budget for the next biennium will have to show a modest increase in resources in real terms, besides being adjusted for inflation and currency changes.

153. Member States are of course entitled to expect that the resources they provide to the Organization will be spent wisely and well. As the Chief Administrative Officer of the Organization, I accept full responsibility for the prudent and effective disbursement of these resources to achieve the goals and priorities established by the Member States.

154. Two years ago, the General Assembly endorsed a radical shift in the way that the United Nations formulates its plans and budgets. We have made considerable progress in implementing this new system of results-based budgeting. However, more work is needed to ensure that Member States have a meaningful way of assessing whether we are achieving the expected results. Furthermore, I believe the time has come to review more comprehensively the planning and budgeting cycle of the Organization in order to align it with the results-based approach. The goal we

should pursue is to make planning and budgeting real strategic instruments in the service of the priorities and the programme of work of the Organization.

Weaknesses of the current budgeting and planning process

155. The planning and budgeting cycle consists of three elements:

(a) A medium-term plan that sets out the priorities of the Organization for a four-year period and which is intended to serve as the basic strategic guidance underpinning the work of the Organization;

(b) A budget outline which provides an indication of the overall level of resources two years in advance;

(c) A detailed, biennial proposed programme budget.

156. There are three oversight and review mechanisms for planning and budgeting:

(a) The Fifth Committee of the General Assembly;

(b) The Committee for Programme and Coordination;

(c) The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

157. The process is seriously flawed: it is complex, protracted, disjointed, time-consuming and rigid. The current system to evaluate the impact of our activities is inadequate. The planning and budgeting cycle must be simplified, and it must become more efficient.

158. Under current procedures, the medium-term plan is considered by the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Fifth Committee; the budget outline and the proposed programme budget are considered by these two bodies, plus the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. In 2001, these three bodies held 295 formal and informal meetings to discuss the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003. In addition, the Fifth Committee met in 106 informal sessions.

159. The documentation submitted for this process is voluminous. The most recent medium-term plan was 222 pages in length. The corresponding programme budget contained 31 separate sections and totalled roughly 2,000 pages.

160. The process is spread over a very long period of time. The medium-term plan, with a four-year planning horizon, is particularly cumbersome and impractical. Thus, the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005, which was formulated in 1999 and approved in 2000, could not reflect the political consensus and budgetary implications of the Millennium Declaration. Similarly, the budget preparation cycle starts 18 months ahead of the biennium to which it relates.

161. The current system leads to a strategic disconnection between the main instruments of programme planning, embodied in the medium-term plan, and resource allocation, which takes the form of the budget outline and the proposed programme budget. The Organization's medium-term plan and its budget cover different time frames and are considered by separate bodies on different occasions. Not surprisingly, there is little coherence between these disparate planning and budgeting exercises, and decisions on institutional priorities are made in isolation from decisions on the use of scarce resources.

162. In the 18 months before a budget is approved, countless hours are spent preparing submissions, servicing meetings and conducting negotiations for a total resource appropriation that changes only negligibly from the previous biennium. In 2001, the Secretariat provided 563 pages of written replies to 490 written questions. We estimate that approximately US$ 10.3 million worth of Secretariat staff time was spent servicing the work of the Committees.

163. The Secretary-General, despite serving as the Chief Administrative Officer of the Organization, has no authority to shift any money between programmes, or from staff to non-staff costs, without the prior approval of Member States. Yet Member States have granted flexibility to many heads of specialized agencies, funds and programmes in order to improve their capacity to respond to fast-changing demands.

164. The existing systems for reporting and evaluating the performance of programmes have no practical impact on future plans and resource allocation decisions. At the end of each biennium, the status of completion of more than 36,000 outputs is collated in a programme performance report, the contents of which are simply noted by the Committee for Programme and Coordination. Two in-depth evaluations on selected

programmes are carried out each year. Programme or funding changes rarely emerge from either review.

165. In sum, the planning and budgeting cycle is fragmented, prone to duplication and burdened with excessive paperwork. It does not encourage a rigorous, strategic approach to establishing priorities and allocating resources accordingly. Member States and the Secretariat spend inordinate amounts of time and scarce resources on this process. Smaller countries are especially disadvantaged, since they simply do not have the capacity to stretch their very limited human resources to participate actively in all of the stages and parts of the cycle.

Simplifying the process

166. In some parts of the United Nations system, Member States have shown themselves open to innovative and far-reaching changes in the processes of programme planning and budgeting. The World Health Organization, for example, has revamped its entire budgeting process, resulting in a shorter, streamlined and essentially strategic budget document of 100 pages in length. Its budget combines programmatic direction with resource projections and focuses on results, thus greatly reducing the process of intergovernmental negotiation.

167. I believe a simpler process of planning and budgeting would enable delegates to focus their attention on objectives and results instead of quantitative measures of input and output, and would allow them to make the necessary link between programmes of work and choices on resource allocation, within a realistic planning horizon. In addition, the intergovernmental review process itself should be streamlined, consistent with this philosophy.

Action 21. **An improved planning and budgeting system should include the following features:**

(a) A shorter, more strategic medium-term plan covering two years rather than four, and submitted closer to the period to which it relates;

(b) A budget outline that could be combined with the medium-term plan;

(c) A shorter, more strategic budget with supplementary detail provided separately;

(d) Flexibility to reallocate resources between programmes and between allocations for personnel and other allocations by up to 10 per cent within a single budgetary period;

(e) A strengthened system of evaluation and monitoring that will better measure the impact of our work.

Action 22. **Consistent with the above approach, I recommend that the intergovernmental review of plans and budgets currently performed by both the Fifth Committee and the Committee for Programme and Coordination be absorbed under the aegis of the Fifth Committee itself.**

Streamlining peacekeeping budgets

168. As at June 2002, the Organization had 15 peacekeeping missions in operation, of varying magnitude and scope, at a combined total cost of approximately US$ 2.8 billion for the year ending 30 June 2002. The budget documents prepared to date have been highly detailed and unwieldy. I intend to reduce the size of these budget documents significantly and hope that this will help Member States to concentrate their attention on the expected outcomes of a mission, and improve their ability to evaluate its effectiveness and financial management.

169. In addition, in a recent resolution, the General Assembly requested a feasibility study on the possibility of consolidating mission budgets. This proposal has the potential to further streamline our budgeting process in this area.

Action 23. **Future peacekeeping budgets will be presented in a new format, reflecting a more strategic approach to the process of resource allocation.**

Improving the management of trust funds

170. To ensure reliable and predictable funding, it is extremely important that the core activities of the Secretariat be funded from assessed contributions. The development and operational agencies of the United Nations system also need a solid base of unrestricted contributions from which to implement their core activities.

171. Voluntary contributions have been a very useful supplement to the regular budget of the United Nations.

However, their administration has become rather complicated. There are currently about 200 trust funds administered by the Secretariat for a wide variety of programme activities and themes. Within each fund, there are a large number of components by operation, activity or source of funding — many of which have distinct administrative requirements. There must be greater clarity with donors on the terms and conditions for trust fund contributions. There is also considerable room for simplification and rationalization. Improvements could be made in the following ways:

(a) A consolidation and reduction in the number of trust funds;

(b) An updated and rationalized approach to trust fund management, by standardizing terms and conditions as much as possible and streamlining project delivery reports;

(c) A revision of the current system of support cost charges;

(d) A simplification of our own internal procedures in order to accelerate access to trust fund monies and to improve the control and administration of the funds.

Action 24. **The management of trust funds will be improved by:**

(a) Consolidating and reducing their number;

(b) Harmonizing as much as possible the rules and requirements relating to trust fund management and reporting;

(c) Revising the system of support cost charges;

(d) Streamlining procedures for accessing trust fund monies.

VI. The Organization and its people: investing in excellence

172. The aspirational aims of the United Nations Millennium Declaration can only be achieved if we have a world-class staff equal to the challenges of our new global era. The impact and vitality of the Organization rests upon having a core cadre of international civil servants who dedicate their careers to the service of the United Nations, and who are devoted to its mission in myriad locations spanning the globe. This will continue to be the cornerstone of our human resource policy. In addition, achieving a geographically diverse and gender-balanced workforce — without compromising on the excellence we seek throughout the United Nations — will remain an enduring priority and source of strength for the entire Organization. We are committed to attracting talented candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented countries. We are also making progress in our efforts to increase the number of women among the Professional ranks. However, we still have a long way to go in achieving an acceptable gender balance, in particular at the senior level.

173. In the present section, I enumerate measures that will foster the excellence of our workforce. These include improving staff mobility, enhancing career prospects for the General Service staff, helping our workforce achieve a better balance in their professional and personal lives, and strengthening staff management throughout the Organization.

174. One of my priorities in my first term was to improve the Organization's professional capacity and to promote a new culture of performance, accountability and trust. We have made significant strides — for example, the development of a comprehensive human resource management strategy which was endorsed by the Assembly two years ago, and a new system for the way we recruit, promote and move our people. I am confident that these measures will bear fruit in the years to come.

175. Thousands of our staff serving in difficult field locations are exposed to great danger in performing their duties. In 2001, Member States supported major steps to strengthen security mechanisms and improve safety for staff in the field. The issue of staff security will remain a central concern for all United Nations managers.

Mechanisms and incentives to encourage mobility

176. The new placement system introduced earlier in 2002 incorporates a mobility requirement for promotion to the senior levels. A managed reassignment programme for junior professionals has begun to have an impact. However, additional steps should be taken that will encourage mobility and facilitate movement between locations and functions.

We must nurture and reward staff who are able to respond to the diverse demands of the Organization as and where they arise.

177. There are several important obstacles to overcome:

(a) Compensation packages have not evolved to meet the needs of large numbers of staff serving in hardship and non-family duty stations. This is particularly important given the Secretariat's increasing operational role in peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction;

(b) United Nations organizations in the field sometimes compete with each other for the best staff through an array of different contracts and benefits. Often, competent, long-serving staff continue to find themselves on short-term contracts, with very limited career prospects;

(c) Some of our established duty stations continue to face considerable obstacles in recruiting qualified staff because of insufficiently attractive terms of conditions for appointment to these locations;

(d) Opportunities for employment of spouses are an increasingly relevant factor in attracting candidates for jobs around the globe. Our agreements with host countries, as well as the arrangements between the Secretariat and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, do not always facilitate or encourage employment of spouses. Problems range from a lack of available openings to visa and work permit restrictions.

178. There are a number of measures that the Organization can take to address these problems:

Action 25. **In order to enhance staff mobility across the United Nations system, we will:**

(a) Review, by the end of 2003, the contractual arrangements and benefits offered to Secretariat staff in field locations, with a view to ensuring that they are comparable or equivalent to those of the United Nations funds and programmes;

(b) Review agreements between the Secretariat and the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, in order to reduce current barriers to mobility between common-system organizations;

(c) Create longer-term contractual prospects for deserving staff serving in field missions;

(d) Identify special recruitment and reward mechanisms for duty stations at which there are debilitating vacancy rates;

(e) Review all arrangements between the Secretariat and the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies in order to ensure that spouses of United Nations staff with appropriate qualifications are given favourable consideration when applying for posts in field locations;

(f) Approach Governments to explore possibilities for the renegotiation of host country agreements so as to allow United Nations spouses to work in those countries.

Enlarging opportunities for General Service staff

179. General Service staff, who represent nearly half the Organization's workforce, are an extraordinary source of skill and expertise. I very much regret that the Assembly has chosen to limit their possibilities for promotion to the Professional level, by mandating very restrictive annual quotas. I urge Member States to review their position so that our top performers have genuine prospects for advancement. At a minimum, I suggest raising the annual quota of P-2 posts available for successful General Service examination candidates to 25 per cent.

180. The United Nations must create more opportunity and incentives that will make the careers of General Service staff more rewarding. We need to create a better, more structured programme for induction on arrival in the Organization, and provide more assistance to General Service staff in planning and managing their careers, including possibilities for serving in the field. I am sure that General Service staff, in turn, will respond with renewed motivation and commitment to the Organization.

181. Finally, in recognition of the fact that the contribution of all United Nations staff is important regardless of whether they are General Service or Professional, all staff members should be referred to as international civil servants.

Action 26. **I urge Member States to consider lifting the restrictions on the numbers of General Service staff eligible for promotion to the Professional category.**

Action 27. **An implementation plan will be developed over the next 12 months, which will include:**

(a) A comprehensive review of General Service functions, responsibilities and competencies;

(b) Improvements to the system of General Service induction and career planning;

(c) Opportunities and incentives for mobility across functions, offices and service in field and peacekeeping missions.

Action 28. **Effective 1 January 2003, all employees of the United Nations Secretariat will be referred to as international civil servants.**

Helping staff to balance professional and private lives

182. One way to attract and retain quality staff, in particular women, is to pay more attention to the conditions that will lead to a better balance between their professional and personal lives. It is time to align the work practices of the Secretariat with that of many national civil services and United Nations entities.

183. A pilot project allowing staff flexible working arrangements has been in place in one department at Headquarters and in some other duty stations. The provisions include the right to work away from the office, scheduled breaks for external activities, such as additional study, and compressed work schedules compensated by time off from work. Such provisions, if adopted more broadly, will help to achieve a diverse and mobile workforce.

184. There is a need to increase opportunities for part-time employment and job-sharing within the Secretariat, which have been relatively limited to date. Expanding the possibilities will give staff with families or other commitments more flexibility.

Action 29. **The following measures will be introduced:**

(a) Introducing flexible working arrangements in all Secretariat departments, subject to work requirements, from 1 January 2003;

(b) Broadening the opportunities for part-time employment for Secretariat staff.

Rejuvenating the Organization

185. The United Nations needs to redouble its efforts to attract fresh talent to the Organization and to sharpen the skills of existing staff. The Secretariat is at a critical juncture with respect to this challenge. Between 2000 and 2005, the number of retirements is expected to double. More generally, to attract and retain younger people we must transform the Organization's management culture — traditionally hierarchical and rigid — to one that stimulates new ideas and the vigorous exchange of views, irrespective of grade, seniority and tenure.

186. To address these concerns, the United Nations must move forward in the following ways:

(a) First, the Organization needs to be more systematic in planning succession so as to ensure that the vast repositories of institutional memory are not lost with the departure of staff;

(b) Second, a more concerted effort is required to target the recruitment of young people. One avenue is a systematic approach to academic institutions, especially in unrepresented and underrepresented Member States. Another group to target are the superior performers among national officers who have served in the field;

(c) Third, any organization operating in a dynamic environment needs the flexibility to offer early departure packages to staff whose separation is in its best interests. This should include providing career placement assistance and facilitating transition arrangements.

Action 30. **Measures will be introduced to:**

(a) Enable better planning for the replacement of departing staff members;

(b) Develop more targeted recruitment mechanisms;

(c) Enhance the existing departure package to include career placement assistance and facilitating transition arrangements.

187. Finally, I would like to stress that more attention must be paid to training staff to meet the new challenges that they will encounter in a rapidly changing world. As an organization, we spend approximately 1 per cent of our total budget on learning activities, which is significantly less than comparable organizations. We need to spend more to ensure that our staff can sharpen their skills and maximize their contribution. Ideally, there should be an annual minimum requirement for all staff, including managers, to spend on learning activities. This will depend, in part, on available resources.

Action 31. **I will recommend in the next biennium budget a significant increase in the resources allocated to training.**

Continuing efforts to improve management

188. Improving the quality of management was a priority of my first term. I have put great emphasis on establishing clear lines of responsibility and ensuring that managers are held accountable for their actions. Since 1997, we have required all managers to participate in people management training, developed professional competencies and implemented a new system of personnel appraisal. I am confident that the new system of recruitment, by giving managers primary responsibility for staff selection, will lead to a new level of accountability and empowerment. The Staff College at Turin offers us the potential to create a common management culture across the Organization. I am also most encouraged by the efforts of the International Civil Service Commission to create a system-wide senior management service.

189. I intend to adopt additional measures to cut unnecessary layers of bureaucracy. At present, the Organization recruits highly qualified individuals for management functions — yet its procedures do not allow them to manage a budget, procure what they need for everyday activities or authorize travel for their staff.

190. As decision-making authority is devolved to programme managers, the roles and responsibilities of the central service provider, the Department of Management, and those of the executive offices in each of the departments, will need to be reviewed.

Action 32. **In order to continue efforts to improve management:**

(a) A thorough review will be conducted of delegated authority in order to increase the capacity and flexibility of managers to manage the resources allocated to them;

(b) The roles and responsibilities of the Department of Management, along with those of the executive offices, will be redefined in order to support the increased delegation of authority;

(c) Training of managers will be strengthened across the Organization, making particular use of the Staff College.

HIV/AIDS in the workplace

191. It is the responsibility of every modern employer to take adequate measures to address the troubling reality of the global AIDS epidemic. Although the Organization has a policy of non-discriminatory employment, medical support systems and information dissemination for personnel with HIV/AIDS, its implementation has been uneven. We must ensure that all personnel are provided with adequate information and access to medical care and counselling. Just as important is the need for our managers to be well prepared to deal with the human and organizational impact of this tragedy.

Action 33. **A thorough review should be completed to ensure that the Organization's policy on HIV/AIDS is fully implemented, and additional measures should be implemented, where needed, by the end of 2002.**

Better resolution of disputes

192. The internal justice system for resolving staff disputes and disciplinary matters has been a matter of concern over the past few years. The recent creation of a new ombudsman function will offer staff and management an alternative avenue for dispute prevention and resolution. The new Ombudsman has recently taken up her duties. As a result, we look forward to achieving a more integrated, less litigious system of conflict resolution. Nevertheless, we must continue to ensure that our formal justice system is

streamlined and that our staff and managers are made fully aware of their rights and responsibilities.

Action 34. **A review of the current system of internal justice will be conducted to improve the efficiency of the system and to allow staff fair and due process.**

Enhanced pay and benefits

193. Adequate compensation is a very important factor in attracting and retaining good staff. The United Nations needs a more competitive system of pay and benefits. I am, therefore, very encouraged by the discussions at the most recent session of the International Civil Service Commission on the subject of pay and benefits. I urge the Commission to expedite completion of the long-awaited review of this subject.

194. In addition, in 1997, I had proposed an independent review of the Commission itself. That proposal has received the endorsement and strong support of the executive heads of the United Nations system in the Chief Executives Board for Coordination. At the request of the General Assembly, and in close consultation with the Chairman of the Commission, I am proposing to the Assembly the terms of reference for such a review. Its launch would send a strong signal that the Commission and the Assembly take seriously the need to support reform in the system.

Action 35. **I encourage:**

(a) The International Civil Service Commission to finalize its proposals for a more competitive pay and benefits system;

(b) The initiation of an independent review of the operations and functions of the Commission itself.

VII. Managing change

195. The critical criterion for success in a world in rapid flux is the ability to manage change. The past five years have shown that the United Nations can be responsive to change, willing and quick to adapt, and fiscally prudent.

196. The preceding sections set out an agenda for change. The measures described in the present report cumulatively add up to a very different way of doing business. As I have argued before, reform is a process, not an event, and change will not be realized automatically or overnight. Implementing the reforms outlined in the report will require attention in three critical areas: managing the change process itself, training and information technology.

197. First, we will require a dedicated capacity for managing change, in particular in those departments that will undergo significant transformation, such as the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management and the Department of Public Information.

198. Second, the reforms contemplated in the present report will have a significant impact on the nature of many positions within the Organization. Sufficient resources are needed for retraining staff to ensure that they have the skills to meet the new challenges of United Nations reform. In some cases — which I hope will be rare — we may need to offer separation packages.

199. Finally, much of what is proposed, whether in respect of servicing conferences, improving outreach to the public or, indeed, as a result of adopting a more integrated approach to key issues, requires a bigger investment in information technology. The Organization has the potential to build its existing capacity as one of the world's most important global networks, but only if there is a commensurate investment in technology. Conversely, if it does not modernize and enhance its technological capability, the United Nations risks losing its relevance and ability to act at the centre of the world's stage. Furthermore, good management demands good information. We intend to build on the achievements of our Integrated Management Information System. A new strategy for the use of information and communications technologies will be submitted at a subsequent stage of the current session of the Assembly, as requested by Member States.

200. I have asked the Deputy Secretary-General to oversee the implementation of the reform measures described herein. The initiatives in the present report reflect the ideas and suggestions of every part of the Secretariat and the consultations held with all of the funds and programmes of the Organization. Its implementation will require the same kind of

collaborative effort. I am confident that we are all united in our common purpose to strengthen the United Nations.

Action 36. **The Deputy Secretary-General will oversee the implementation of the approved reforms.**